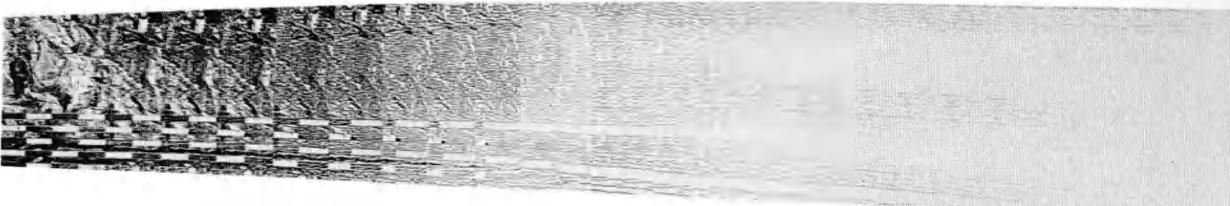




ROBERT BASSLER

CLIFFWALL
METAMORPHOSIS
OF AN IMAGE

LOS ANGELES MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY
JANUARY 24 THROUGH FEBRUARY 22, 1981



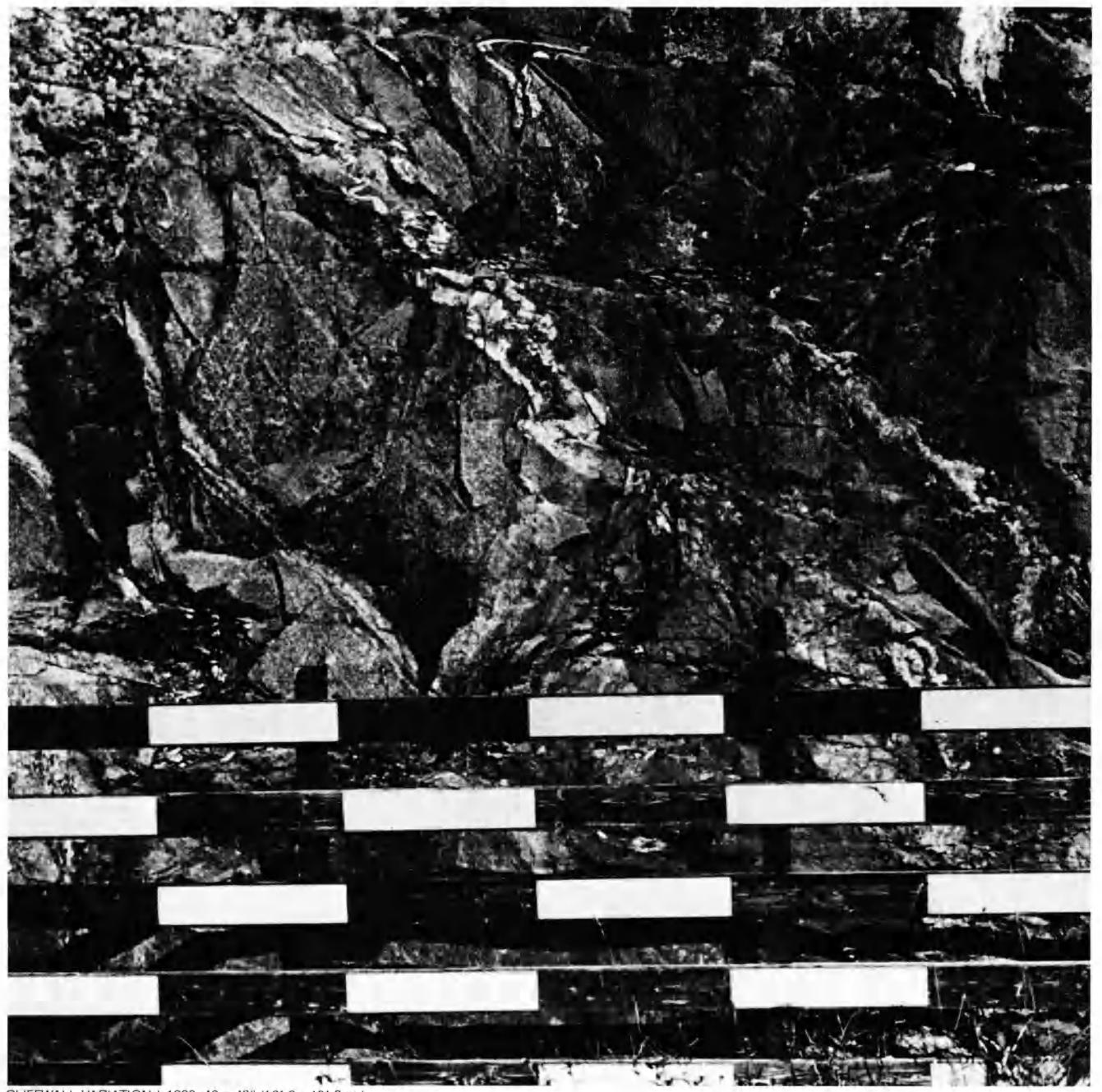
CLIFFWALL TRANSFORMATION, 1978. 9¾ x 48" (24.8 x 122cm)

The source of the "Cliffwall/Barricade" image is from a photographic series related to road symbols and their interaction with the environment.

While exploring various symbolic aspects of these images, I became increasingly possessed by the elusive and mysterious qualities of the Cliffwall. Once the decision was made to investigate the image through the orderly device of a grid, I realized that my curiosity was beginning to become an obsession.

The peculiar juxtaposition of the man-made wooden barrier, against the massive and overwhelming density of the granite cliffwall fascinated and challenged me. It was apparent early on that the challenge involved a need to transform this natural and symbolic barrier into something beyond what normal perceptions allow—something ethereal, consisting of light and an essence of matter—a glimmering presence...

Robert Bassler Nov. 1980



CLIFFWALL VARIATION I, 1980, 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)

In a recent conversation about his work, Robert Bassler discussed his current efforts to bring his relief sculptures off the wall, giving more emphasis to the third dimension, depth, in free-standing form. This exhibition is primarily a statement of the developmental processes of the artist's concerns and hence contains only two forms away from the wall. These forms gain their depth more from transparency and light than from solid structure.

Bassler describes the evolution of the process as follows: from a color slide of wood barriers in front of a cliff wall, he made Xerox prints. Making successive Xerox prints from the preceding print, the image gradually disintegrated into floating abstract shapes. These patterns were then transferred to large scale relief sculptures in which the original cliff barricade

information gives way to abstract, decorative patterning. This information is also transferred to large graphite drawings in which tonalities of black or white change places in the figure/ground relationship.

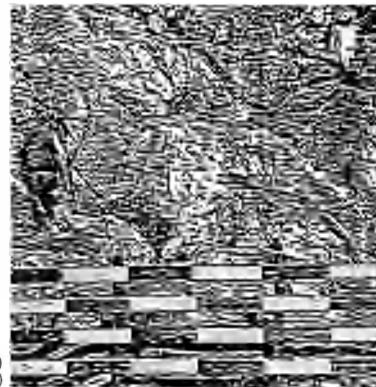
Color, as it was originally seen in the slides and Xeroxes is not used in Bassler's large scale interpretations. Instead, according to the artist, light has become more important—hence the engraved Plexiglas images, in which translucency or transparency of the plastic serves as foil to the engraved patterns.

Bassler feels that this introduction of light as a sculptural tool can assist in his effort to take his work into a broader sculptural format.

While his latest work—the freely suspended, transparent sheets—does take the image off the wall and so what increases both the physical and psychological space of the pieces, it is clear that this developmental process is still going on for Bassler. As in his much earlier work, he again sees the transparency of plastic as a sculptural possibility. It will be interesting to observe in which direction Bassler will now take this focus on transparency in his renewed pursuit of a more spatial sculptural form.



Louise Lewis



CLIFFWALL GENERATION 20, 1978 (DETAIL)
7 x 10% (17.8 x 27cm)

Visual artists absorb stimuli of all kinds—from any source—digest them and transform them into personal statements. Some do it primarily with color, others with form. We divide them according to such differences into painters, sculptors, photographers, not to be confused with video, performance and conceptual artists. It makes descriptive tasks easier—creates a sort of order for those who concern themselves with categories.

In my experience, however, I find that all real artists think conceptually and have at one time or another tried their hand at working in media they usually eschew.

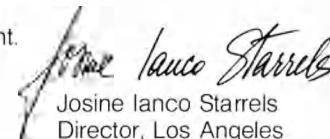
So it might be better if instead of indulging in rigid definitions we simply stated that someone's interest was predominantly focused in this or that area.

Robert Bassler, known as a sculptor, has a long history of working with forms and light in wood, plastic and other materials. This has not kept him from experimenting with other expressive tools.

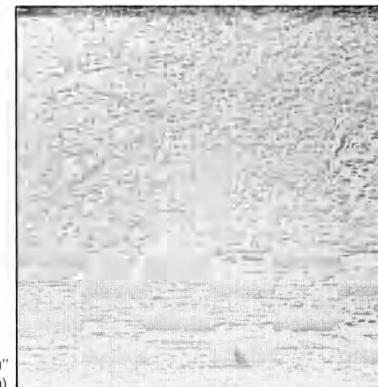
In this exhibition, we have jointly chosen to show works that sequentially follow the evolution of an image; its metamorphosis from color photograph broken down Xerographically, through successive generations into abstract, flowing forms. The emerging rhythmic patterns are then transferred from flat, graphic, marks into sculptural bas reliefs, and further into incised shapes routed onto transparent acrylic surfaces to be activated by light.

I have always been fascinated by the artists' thinking and investigative processes. For me this is, even more than the finished product, evidence of creation in action. In a time when all too many people value only the objects, we need to emphasize that the most important attribute of man is creativity—the process.

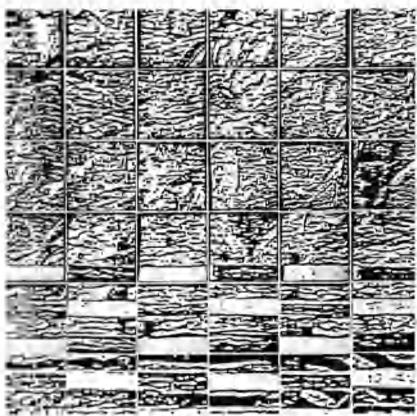
It is with great pleasure that we present this exhibition of Robert Bassler's works which attest to his ideas, and the inventiveness and skill with which he realized them.



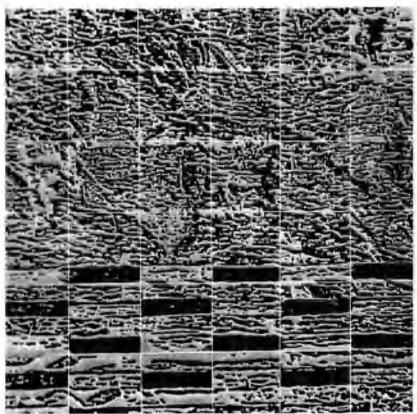
Josine Ianco Starrels
Director, Los Angeles
Municipal Art Gallery



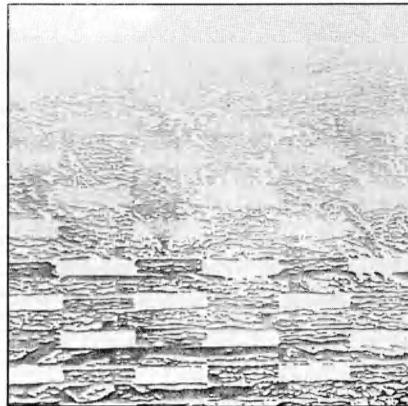
CLIFFWALL VARIATION III, 1980. 40 x 40"
(101.6 x 101.6cm)



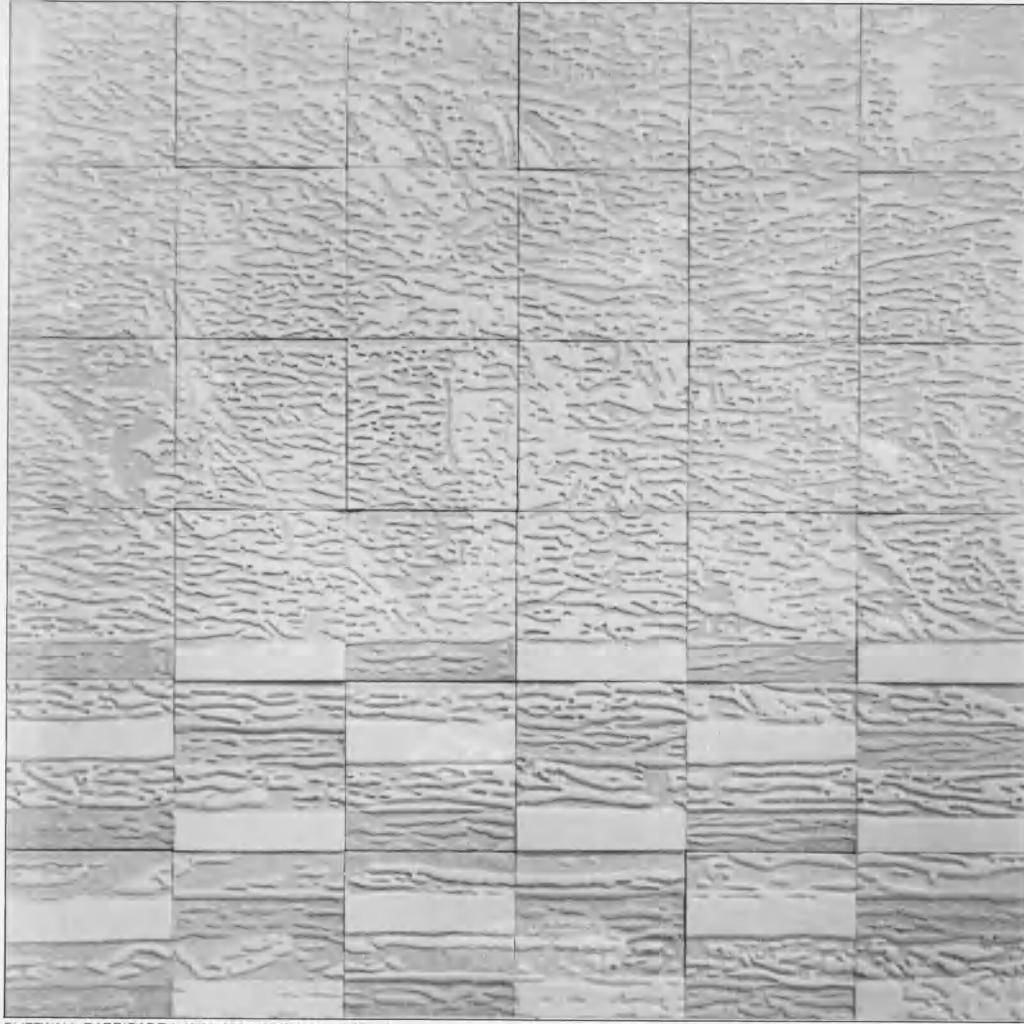
CLIFFWALL VARIATION II (GRID), 1979. 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)



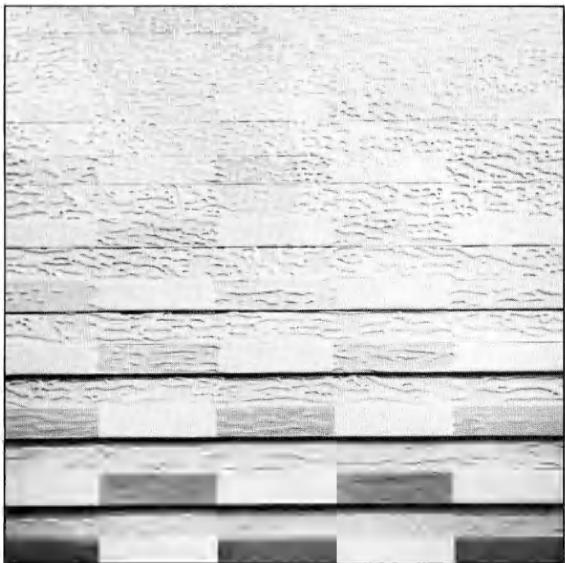
CLIFFWALL VARIATION V (BLACK I), 1980. 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)



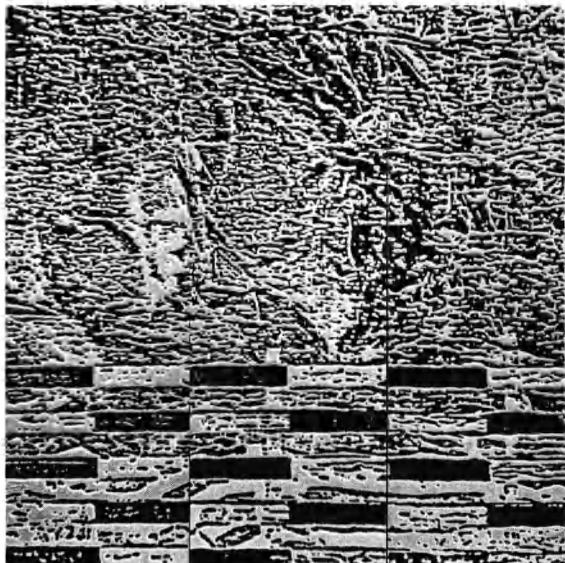
CLIFFWALL VARIATION IV (GHOST), 1980. 40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm)



CLIFFWALL BARRICADE I, 1978. 120 x 120" (305 x 305cm)



CLIFFWALL BARRICADE II, 1979. 93½ x 96" (236.8 x 244cm)



CLIFFWALL TRIPTYCH, 1980. 74½ x 76¼" (188.5 x 193.7cm)



PHOTOGRAPH OF ROBERT BASSLER BY LYNN BASSLER, Fall, 1980.

CATALOG

WALL SCULPTURES

* 1. CLIFFWALL/BARRICADE I Particle board, Paint	120 x 120" (305 x 305cm) 1978
* 2. CLIFFWALL/BARRICADE II Wood, Particle board, Paint	93 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 96" (236.8 x 244cm) 1979

* Represented in Catalog
Dimensions: Height precedes width

ACRYLIC RELIEFS

* 3. CLIFFWALL VARIATION III Insculpted Plexiglas	40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm) 1980
* 4. CLIFFWALL FRAGMENTS Insculpted Plexiglas	24 x 24" (61 x 61cm) 1980
* 5. CLIFFWALL TRIPTYCH Insculpted Plexiglas	74 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 76 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (188.5 x 193.7cm) 1980
* 6. CLIFFWALL PANELS Insculpted Plexiglas	72 x 79" (183 x 200.6cm) 1980-81

DRAWINGS

* 7. CLIFFWALL VARIATION IV (GHOST) Pencil, Paint on Paper	40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm) 1980
* 8. CLIFFWALL VARIATION V (BLACK 1) Pencil, Ink on Paper	40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm) 1980
9. CLIFFWALL VARIATION VI (WHITE 1) Pencil, Paint on Paper	40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm) 1980
10. CLIFFWALL VARIATION VII (BLACK 2) Pencil, Paint on Board	40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm) 1980
11. CLIFFWALL LANDSCAPE FRAGMENTS Prismacolor on Paper	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (16.5 x 16.5cm) 1979

PHOTOGRAPHS & XEROXES

12. CLIFFWALL/BARRICADE—SOURCE Type "R" Color Print	6 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (17.1 x 25.2cm) 1972
* 13. CLIFFWALL—GENERATION 20 Color Xerox	7 x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ " (17.8 x 27cm) 1978
14. CLIFFWALL TRANSFORMATION Color Xerox, 70 generation sequence	9 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 48" (24.8 x 122cm) 1978
* 15. CLIFFWALL VARIATION II (GRID) Color Xerox	40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm) 1979
* 16. CLIFFWALL VARIATION I Black & White Photo	40 x 40" (101.6 x 101.6cm) 1980
17. CLIFFWALL SECTION I Photo enlarged Xerox	30 x 40" (76.2 x 101.6cm) 1978
18. THE ROADSHOW (Selection) Type "R" Color Prints	2 5/16 x 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " (5.8 x 8.2cm) 1972-78



CLIFFWALL BARRICADE III, 1979, 72 x 72"
Collection Carter, Hawley, Hale, Inc.
(Not in Exhibition)



PHOTO BY LYNN BASSLER, Spring 1980.

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

1961-1963 Comara Gallery, Los Angeles
1961, 1970 Thorne Hall, Occidental College, Los Angeles
1964 Bakersfield College, Bakersfield
1965 California State University, Northridge
1965, 1981 Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery
1968 Santa Barbara Museum of Art
1969 Molly Barnes Gallery, Los Angeles
1971 Baxter Art Galleries, California Institute
of Technology, Pasadena
1972 Galerie La Demeure, Paris
1972 Amerika Haus, West Berlin

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

Arts Council of Great Britain
Atlantic Richfield Corporation
The Ahmanson Collection
Chicago Convention Center
Container Corporation of America
Carter, Hawley, Hale Stores, Inc.
Home Savings and Loan, Los Angeles
Central Savings and Loan, San Diego
Camarillo City Hall, Camarillo
Kadison, Pfaelzer, Woodward, Quinn & Rossi
California State University Northridge
University of Southern California
Bard College, New York

BIOGRAPHY

Born: New York City, 1935
Resident of Northridge, California
Education: Chouinard Art Institute, Los Angeles, 1953-54
Bard College, New York, B.A. 1957
University of Southern California, M.F.A., 1960
Positions: Professor, State University, Northridge, 1964-Present
Artist in Residence, Cal Tech, Pasadena, 1970-71
Instructor, Occidental College, Los Angeles, 1960-64

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
San Diego Museum of Art
San Francisco Museum of Art
Oakland Museum of Art
Pasadena Museum of Art
La Jolla Museum of Art
Newport Museum of Art
Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art
Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery
Long Beach Museum
Downey Museum of Art
Conejo Valley Art Museum
Arts Park, Los Angeles
Century City
Milwaukee Art Center
The Jewish Museum
Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg
Ackland Memorial Art Center, Chapel Hill
Jacksonville Art Museum
Houston Museum of Art
Musée D'Art Moderne, Paris
American Embassy, London
Redfern Gallery, London
Comsky Gallery, Los Angeles
Comara Gallery, Los Angeles
Canyon Gallery, Los Angeles
Esther Bear Gallery, Santa Barbara
Joyce Hunsaker & Associates, Los Angeles
University of Southern California, Los Angeles
California State University, Los Angeles
California State University Northridge
Los Angeles Valley College
Pierce College, Woodland Hills
Pasadena City College, Pasadena
Antelope Valley College, Lancaster
Mount San Antonio College, Walnut
Occidental College, Los Angeles

SELECTED REFERENCES (PUBLICATIONS)

Masters of Wood Sculpture, Nicholas Roukes, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. 1980

Cast Resin Sculpture, Five Los Angeles Artists, G.A. Mueller
Unpublished thesis State University Northridge, 1979

Modes and Materials, Exhibition catalog, C.S.U.N., Louise Lewis, 1979

Who's Who in America, 41st Edition 1980-81, Chicago, Illinois.

Sculpture in Plastic, Nicholas Roukes, Watson-Guptill, N.Y. 1978

Artweek "Art Park—Los Angeles", Louise Lewis, April 1977

Proceedings of the Eight International Sculpture Conference,
Elden C. Tefft Ed, National Sculpture Center, Lawrence Kansas, 1976

The Image Maker—Man and his Art, Harold Spencer, Scribner's,
N.Y., 1975

Mercury "Cosmic Perspective Through Art" Iris Reis, Nov/Dec 1974

Leonardo "Lenticular Polyester Resin Sculpture—Transparency and
Light" Robert Bassler, Summer 1972

Robert Bassler, John Cartier, Gordon Wagner, Exhibition Catalog,
American Embassy, London, England, 1972

Artweek, "Robert Bassler Interviewed" Kristin Newton, June 1971

Artists in Residence, Exhibition Catalog, David Smith California Institute
of Technology, Pasadena, 1971

Transparent and Translucent Art, Exhibition Catalog, Lee Malone,
Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida 1971

Artforum "New York, Plastic Presence", Pincus-Witten, Jan. 1970

A Plastic Presence, Exhibition Catalog, T. Atkinson, J. L. Taylor,
Milwaukee Art Center 1969

Art News "Robert Bassler at Molly Barnes", L. Armstrong, Nov. 1969

Artforum "Houston", Henry J. Seldis Feb. 1963

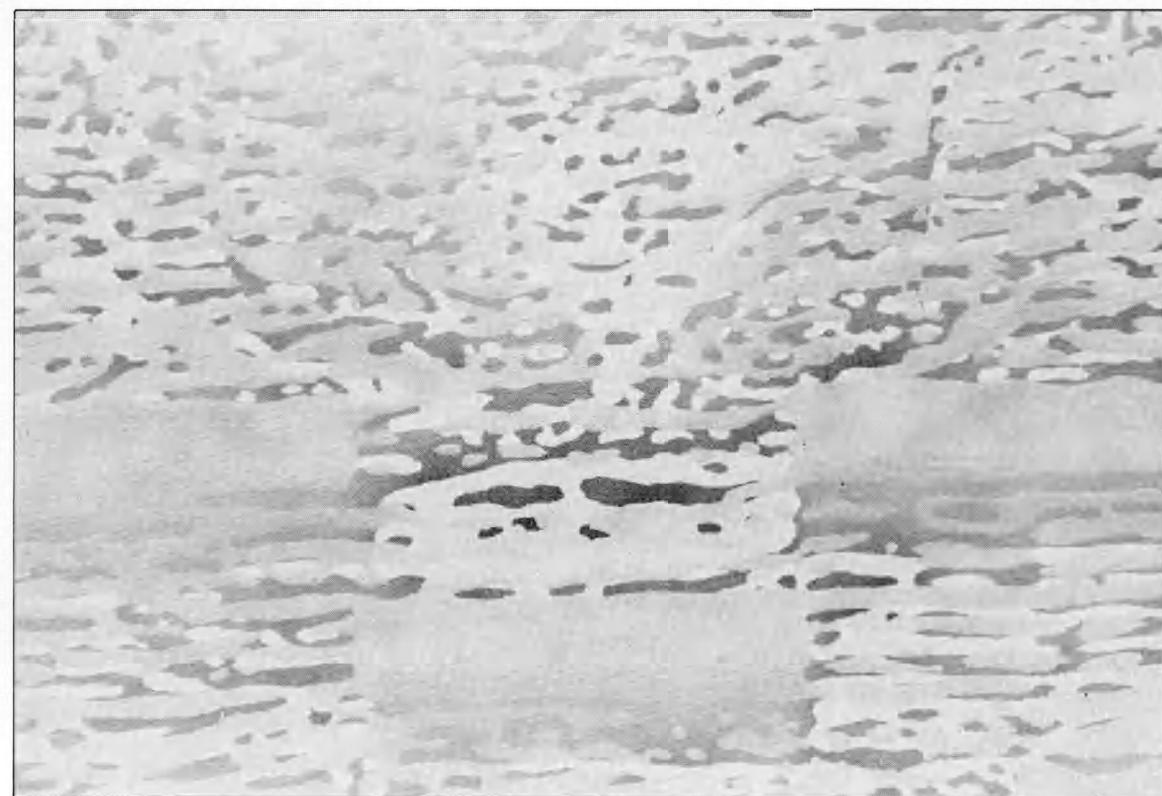
Artforum "A Portfolio of California Sculptors" Aug. 1963

Art News "Los Angeles" Jules Langsner, Dec. 1963

Artforum "Arts of Southern California, Sculpture" Vick Smith, no. 7, 1962

Sculpture, Arts of Southern California XII, Exhibition Catalog,
Gerald Nordland, Long Beach Museum of Art, 1962

Art International "Los Angeles Letter" Jules Langsner, April 1961



DETAIL—CLIFFWALL VARIATION III, 1980.

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